

**My name is Meg Stokes and I live in Markham. I have lived in Markham for most of my life. I grew up in Thornhill and brought my own bags to the York Farmer's Market back in the 70's when it wasn't the trendy thing to do. I brought my tins to the recycling depots at the Thornhill Community Center in the 70's and 80's before blue or green bins were ever invented. In my lifetime as a resident, I think I have used almost all of the Town's recreational facilities, libraries and many of the parks and pathways. I used to lifeguard at Thornlea Pool and met my husband who was a lifeguard at Markham Centennial in 1986. We still live in Markham today and are raising our children here. I was up at 6:30 am this morning to sign onto the Town's website to once again, register my kids for the many recreational programs for Spring that they want to participate in. My children were born at the Markham Stouffville Hospital and attended the daycare in the Town of Markham's own town center.**

**I've attended the Sustainability Fair, the torch relay event, Markham Fairs, Thornhill Festivals, Unionville Parades and hundreds of other Town events over the past 40ish years. Along with my ratepayers association, we adopted our local park, planted a community garden and I am one of hundreds of families that hang out on warm evenings in our neighbourhood park and watch our kids play in the playground. Congestion in our neighbourhood is the lineups at the swingset on Friday nights in the summer.**

**I think I know Markham pretty well.**

**I take great offence with Jim Robb who puts up a photo of bulldozers building my community - which is now home to many community-minded Markham families that live in a world class URBAN center. We can walk to our local community ctr., library and future tennis courts. We will soon be able to walk to a Tim Horton's, TD bank and daycare. We love the new multi-purpose pathway that the town has built along Major Mackenzie. This**

**is the future of Markham. ALL of my life, growing up in Markham, I have heard about the Yonge subway being extended north of Finch. Even today, with the staff recommended plan, we have great challenges and huge risks that Metrolinx will actually do what they say they are going to do.**

**To the two Councillors that have proposed this foodbelt - how much of the proposed foodbelt or greenbelt lands are in your wards? How many Markham farmers did you talk to before proposing this plan? What have you been doing with yourselves and my tax dollars for the past two years while our town staff have conducted public meetings, paid for dozens of assessments and reports and have made their educated recommendations?**

**I cannot compete with the countless, highly funded environmental organizations that have been whisked into Town to fight this media hyped proposal. How can you fight David Suzuki? But where has he and all the others been for the past 40 years while I have watched our farmers struggle with farms that were not economically viable? Do Suzuki and the others from Toronto even understand that our farmers cannot transport their farm equipment on Markham roads? Does he know that the average age of the Markham farmer is over 67? How much local produce has he or any of these other "out-of-Markham" organizations bought from Markham farmers?**

**Sure its nice to say create a foodbelt - who wouldn't? The Pollara poll that was conducted shows that 91% of respondents – those are residents of Markham, are not very familiar with this issue. 91% of your voters are not very familiar with this proposal.**

**Sure the foodbelt is a sexy concept! But did anyone during the Pollara poll explain to the respondents the devastating impact a foodbelt would have on local farmers' families? Did anyone explain that if farmers sell their**

lands they can buy larger farms outside of Markham and actually make a profit from farming and continue to do what they love to do? Did anyone explain a foodbelt means huge #'s of apartments in Markham & total traffic nightmares? Did anyone explain to respondents that we have had 0% tax increases for 2 years (not 4% like the city of Toronto) because of smart planning and smart growth by the Town's planning department and this council?

You want a foodbelt? Buy the farmlands at fair market value and build one. Don't use my tax dollars. Get all of these environmental organizations together and buy the land. Don't rob the farmers of their lands and their rights.

I am a resident of Markham, part of the silent majority (well maybe not so silent now) that want OUR voices heard. I speak for my kids. I do not want my kids to grow up playing in parks surrounded by high-rises. I will vote for the Councillors that are smart, educated, and understand what real Markham residents want and need and not be told by outsiders how to further create our world class community. I am a resident and on behalf of the Board of Angus Glen Ratepayers Association, we want SMART, BALANCED GROWTH!!! Let's adopt the preferred growth plan that the staff recommends and get on with task planning a balanced world-class community in Markham together.